

Farewell editorial from the founding editors

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Abstract: The retiring Editor-in-Chief and Deputy Editor provide a brief retrospective of the first six volumes of *Biomedical Optics Express*, thank the Editorial Board and OSA professional staff, and endorse the new journal leadership and the continued support of the journal by the biomedical optics community.

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OCIS codes: (000.1200) Announcements, awards, news, and organizational activities; (000.5360) Physics literature and publications.

In six volumes and 65 issues since *Biomedical Optics Express* (*BOEx*) first appeared in August 2010, the journal has published over 1,700 high quality papers spanning all facets of optics and photonics related to the life sciences from submissions all around the world. As our term as founding editors of *BOEx* concludes on December 31, 2015, we could not be more pleased with the embrace of the journal by OSA's longstanding biomedical optics community and the broader acceptance by authors, readers, and reviewers new to OSA. Submissions to *BOEx* have increased each year, averaging 16% annual growth rate over the first five full years, nearly doubling over that period. A key factor in *BOEx*'s acceptance has likely been its short time to publication—a rarity in biomedical science—averaging approximately 70 days from initial submission to archival publication. Despite rapid growth and rapid time to publication, the journal's editorial dedication to quality has remained consistently high. The journal's ISI impact factor has increased each year, now ranking as the highest among OSA's non-review journals and the highest among biomedical journals in the optics category.

As a startup journal, *BOEx* has pioneered several innovations in OSA publishing, ranging from the use of graphic icons and movies in the table of contents and journal cover page, to journal watermarks, video commentaries from authors, a community page, and inclusion of a virtual journal reflecting biomedical content in all OSA journals. *BOEx* also has played a key role in developing and piloting new OSA policies on inclusion of supplementary materials in articles, and in conflict of interest disclosures.

All of these accomplishments are the direct result of the tireless dedication of our Editorial Board. The bulk of the work of the journal is done by its Associate Editors, who provide the expertise, diligence, and judgment required to direct peer review of all submitted articles and render acceptance decisions. Please take the next opportunity to thank one of these individuals, or better yet, accept and perform timely reviews when next asked by one of them. Unique among OSA journals, *BOEx* also benefits from the advice of a seasoned Board of Advisory Editors. We wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to all of these individuals for their expertise, dedication, and friendship, as well as those who served in other Editorial capacities related to the community page and Virtual Journal for Biomedical Optics.

The professional staff at OSA accomplishes the remarkable feat of running a premier scientific publishing organization using only a part-time volunteer Editorial Board. We thank each of the staff with whom we have worked for their extraordinary professionalism, competency, dedication, and cheerful collaboration.

Finally, we are thrilled that the journal will continue under the capable direction of new Editor-in-Chief Prof. Christoph Hitzenberger of the Medical University of Vienna, and new Deputy Editor Prof. Adam Gibson of University College London. Profs. Hitzenberger and Gibson have both been frequent authors as well as valued members of our Advisory and Associate Editorial Boards, respectively, and we are confident the journal will continue to flourish under their leadership. We encourage all members of the *BOEx* community to

respond to opportunities to contribute to the journal, and to take full advantage of this platform to set and maintain standards for excellence in scientific accuracy, integrity, transparency, and peer review in our field.

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